

# Trendy Touches

Marry the traditional with the trendy by incorporating some of these elements in your own wedding.

BY ARTIKA TRAINO



Today's weddings are all about blending familiar customs with the latest trends. So feel free to keep the tradition of having bridesmaids, but allow the ladies to choose their dress in the color of your choice. Or take a cue from Hollywood brides like Katie Holmes and Eva Longoria by adorning your tresses with tiara and veil, but keeping your locks loose instead of in the standard up-do. We found some of the latest trends in weddings, designed to make your day modern, hassle-free and, most important, as unique and fabulous as you.

## Personalize It

Certain practices have become a staple in weddings—the reception, the bouquet toss, the first dance. But there's no rule that says you can't customize and revise these traditions to make them your own. Everyone is familiar with the tradition of the bouquet toss. Many brides are forgoing the singles-only toss in favor of honoring their relationship role models, those couples who have been married for 10, 20 or 50-plus years. You can toss your bouquet to these special women, or make it a last-couple-standing game. Have the DJ ask questions to see which couple has been together longest, with the lucky twosome winning the flowers.

Then there's the tradition of the first dance of husband and wife, an undoubtably sentimental notion. But what about the second, third and fourth dances? Many couples are adding a personal touch by including an extra song, perhaps for all family members or all couples to share. Newlyweds with children often include an extra dance for the groom and his daughter or for the bride and her son.

"Every bride wants a special, unique flair that reflects her," says Terri McCracken, social sales manager at the Chase Center in Wilmington. "The biggest trend in weddings is the personal touch that couples add."

## Revamp your Registry

The French have a proverb when it comes to weddings: two souls, one heart.<sup>1</sup>

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The American equivalent might be something along the lines of "two blenders, one house." As unromantic as it may sound, more couples are merging not only their lives, but all of their collective junk.

For Newark residents and recent newlyweds Kara White and Brian Schilling, a registry on [www.thehoneymoon.com](http://www.thehoneymoon.com) that allowed guests to contribute to the couple's stay in Hawaii seemed appropriate.

"I could have registered only at Target," White says. "But do I need one more mixing bowl? Probably not. We don't even have the cabinet space for that."

Instead, she explains, the on-line registry is a tactful way of saying "I don't need this, but I could use this""this being a \$75 candlelit dinner on the beach or a \$90 hotel room massage, among other gifts. And for those who are uncomfortable with the site, the couple also registered at Macy's. "But," White adds, "it's not even long enough for our 180 guests."

## Not Goin' to the Chapel

To avoid traveling from one location to another, couples are now holding their ceremonies and receptions in the same place.

Robin Price, director of catering sales for Dover Downs Hotel & Casino, sees it all the time. "It seems that it's just more convenient for couples to do it this way," she says.

When Sutapa Das and Jeff Boyd married in June 2005, they knew they would need to hold two ceremonies, an American one and a Hindu one. They chose Bellevue Hall in North Wilmington as the site of their outdoor, American ceremony, and the Wyndham hotel (now the Doubletree) in Wilmington for their Hindu ceremony and wedding reception.

"It was already going to be a long day for us, and for our guests, so we knew we were going to have one ceremony at the hotel," Das says. The setting proved to be more intimate and gave the couple more time to socialize with their 240 guests. "If I could have," she says, "I would've had both ceremonies and reception in one spot."

## Food Stations

Food is perhaps the most remembered, most discussed aspect of a wedding, and its importance is as much about quality as it is about presentation.

"Very few brides opt for a seated meal anymore," says Lee Gallagher of Gallagher and Gallagher Catering in Wilmington. Buffets and food stations are popular because they tend to be less expensive (there's not as much fine china to rent) and create a friendly environment where guests can mingle. They're also great for couples with vegetarians in the family or for brides and grooms of different ethnicities and backgrounds.

One way to liven up food stations is to do a his-and-hers dinner, with half of the stations serving the groom's favorite foods, and the other half, the bride's. Leanne Affeldt, co-owner of Make My Day Event Planning and More in Lewes and Milford, suggests creating signs that explain the significance of a particular station. It could be the couple's favorite meal or the first dessert they shared. "Not only is it cute," Affeldt says, "but it's something to keep you busy while waiting in the buffet line."

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## Think Theme

Themes are another big trend, perhaps because you can incorporate any concept into a favor or a centerpiece. One of the most fun ways to show off your motif is in the dessert. Themed cakes have become more common in recent years, says Kim Lorii, pastry chef and owner of Cakes by Kim in Wilmington. From tropical cakes with red hibiscus flowers to beachy confections made of aqua butter cream and white chocolate seashells, "There is always a way to dress up the cake for the occasion," Lorii says.

But themes go well beyond the cake. Some couples start their wedding planning with a specific concept in mind, while others, like Mandi Rosado of Newark, just fall into one. Mandi's July 2007 wedding theme evolved into what she refers to as "classy bling bling." The idea centered around diamonds, which is her and her husband's birthstone. What began as napkin holders shaped like diamonds turned into diamond-inspired champagne flutes and cake topper, and sparkling stones in the bouquet arrangements. "Things that go with your theme are easy to find if you have the eye to look for them," she says. "And it's important to choose a theme that represents you."

## Lose the Limo

More couples are skipping the limos and Rolls for more casual modes of transportation. Lauren Ostroski and Dan Bailey, of Dover, arrived at their Dewey Beach wedding by limo and left in a rickshaw. Their rationale? A limo would look silly driving along the gravel road leading up to their North Shore venue, which is neatly situated on Rehoboth bay. And it would have been far too pricy to rent one for the duration of their six-hour ceremony and reception. And though they were arriving in a limo but not leaving in one, they still wanted to leave in something. "It's a casual, fun wedding anyway," Ostroski says. "And it's a neat way to incorporate Dewey into the wedding."

## Let Loose

Couples who are still ready to party after the reception can continue the celebration with an after party, a trend that's gained popularity recently. Consider it your reception remix. It's a chance to take your still-amped friends to the hotel bar or a restaurant's private dining room, where the revelry can continue. The cake may have been cut, but the night doesn't have to be cut short.